

OUR LADY OF FATIMA - 13 MAY 2020

"*Abide in me!*" Jesus says. We're branches on the vine and we have to stay connected to it, to be at home in it, or else we will wither up and be useless. Dry twigs don't produce Merlot!

In a way, those three words, "*Abide in me!*" encapsulate the whole message of Fatima. Our Lady showed the children a vision of Hell, but Our Lord had set it out in the Gospel we have for today - the dry sticks, pruned off, gathered up, and burned in the fire! Our Lady told the children to pray for the conversion of sinners, but conversion is directed to one thing - *abiding in Christ*. Nor can we pray for the conversion of sinners, nor offer up reparations for them and for sins, if we don't dwell in Christ, who offered the one perfect sacrifice for all sins. The message of Fatima is the same as the Gospel, and remains vitally necessary today — Fatima is Our Lady's reminder to remain in living relationship with her Son. Of course, that is nigh-on impossible to do, without also maintaining a connection with his Mother. The Mother and the Son, have an intertwined relationship, and we, once grafted into the vine become beneficiaries of it. Our Lady tells us to pray the Rosary, pray for sinners, pray that souls may be saved from Hell, that we all may remain in Jesus, her Son, and be united with him in Heaven.

We have many questions though, don't we! Stuff comes up all the time. Should we do this or that? What is the right or wrong thing to do in this situation? How should we respond to this or that issue? Jesus says, "*Abide in me!*" but how do we answer all the questions, the demands, the problems we face? We do it by doing what those in the First Reading did - we take it to the Church, we take it to the Magisterium - just like they did, while abiding in Jesus. They didn't settle for their own opinions on the matter of circumcision. No, that's what the liberal or the subjectivist does. Instead, they sent the question to the Apostles. "*Abide in me!*" involves union with the Vine and the Branches planted by the Lord himself, not going off and trying to grow our own vine. If we live only in ourselves, we will wither. If we answer questions only from our own resources, we will end up trapped in our own heads.

Anyone can believe that God exists; even the demons do! By reason alone, a philosopher can conclude God exists. The question is not whether God exists or not — only the fool denies it — rather the question is: *Does God care about us?* To prove the affirmative, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born in time, into this creation of his. He prepared the soil by gradually revealing Himself to Israel, and in that soil, the vine sprang up, the True Vine, Christ. So God entered the world in the Incarnation through Mary, proving that He loves us. That Vine spread his tendrils on the Cross and died for us, saving us, then sprang back to life from the garden tomb, confirming his love is everlasting. So too, God is still breaking into our lives. He does it at Fatima, again, calling us back to Himself, back to his love, calling us to "*Abide in me!*" by calling us to love, and calling on us to call others into his love through our own sacrifices and reparations offered for conversion. "*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.*" So let us ask that all souls may be saved from the fires of Hell and led to Heaven, especially those in most need of God's mercy!